

OR of *bite* used for *cheat*.

---More a dupe than wit,  
Sappho can tell you, how this man was *bit*.

POPE.

AND lastly, may be produced the peculiar sense, in which a word is found in any great author. As *faculties* in Shakespeare signifies the powers of authority.

---This Duncan  
Has born his *faculties* so meek, has been  
So clear in his great office, that &c.

THE signification of adjectives, may be often ascertained by uniting them to substantives, as *simple swain*, *simple sheep*; sometimes the sense of a substantive may be elucidated by the epithets annexed to it in good authors, as the *boundless ocean*, the *open lawns*, and where such advantage can be gained by a short quotation it is not to be omitted.

THE difference of signification in words generally accounted synonymous, ought to be carefully observed; as in *pride*, *haughtiness*, *arrogance*; and the strict and critical meaning ought to be distinguished from that which is loose and popular; as in the word *perfection*, which though in its philosophical and exact sense, it can be

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of little use among human beings, is often so much degraded from its original signification, that the academicians have inserted in their work *the perfection of a language*, and with a little more licentiousness might have prevailed on themselves to have added *the perfection of a dictionary*.

THERE are many other characters of words which it will be of use to mention. Some have both an active and passive signification, as *fearful*, that which gives or which feels terror, a *fearful prodigy*, a *fearful hare*. Some have a personal, some a real meaning, as in opposition to *old* we use the adjective *young* of animated beings, and *new* of other things. Some are restrained to the sense of praise, and others to that of disapprobation, so commonly, though not always, we *exhort* to good actions, we *instigate* to ill; we *animate*, *incite* and *encourage* indifferently to good or bad. So we usually *ascribe* good, but *impute* evil; yet neither the use of these words, nor perhaps of any other in our licentious language, is so established as not to be often reversed by the correctest writers. I shall therefore, since the rules of style, like those of law, arise from precedents often repeated, collect the testimonies on both sides, and endeavour to discover and promulgate the decrees of custom, who has so long possessed, whether by right or by usurpation, the sovereignty of words.

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